

1.0 Budget Consultation Survey

1.1 The Council's budget consultation and scrutiny period was open from 21 October 2019 to 17 January 2020, however due to the announcement of the General Election in December 2019 and compliance with the Code of Practice during the pre-election period, the formal budget consultation period opened a little later to the public than originally anticipated between 17 December 2019 and 17 January 2020.

1.2 As part of the 2020-2021 budget consultation process, stakeholders including the public and Council employees have had the opportunity to provide their views via an online survey. The themes that respondents have had the opportunity to comment on include:

- Services that are most important to them;
- Protecting services from further cuts;
- Alternative services and new ways of working;
- Raising Council Tax;
- Additional flexibility to levy increases to the Adult Social Care precept.

1.3 The key findings are detailed in the paragraphs below.

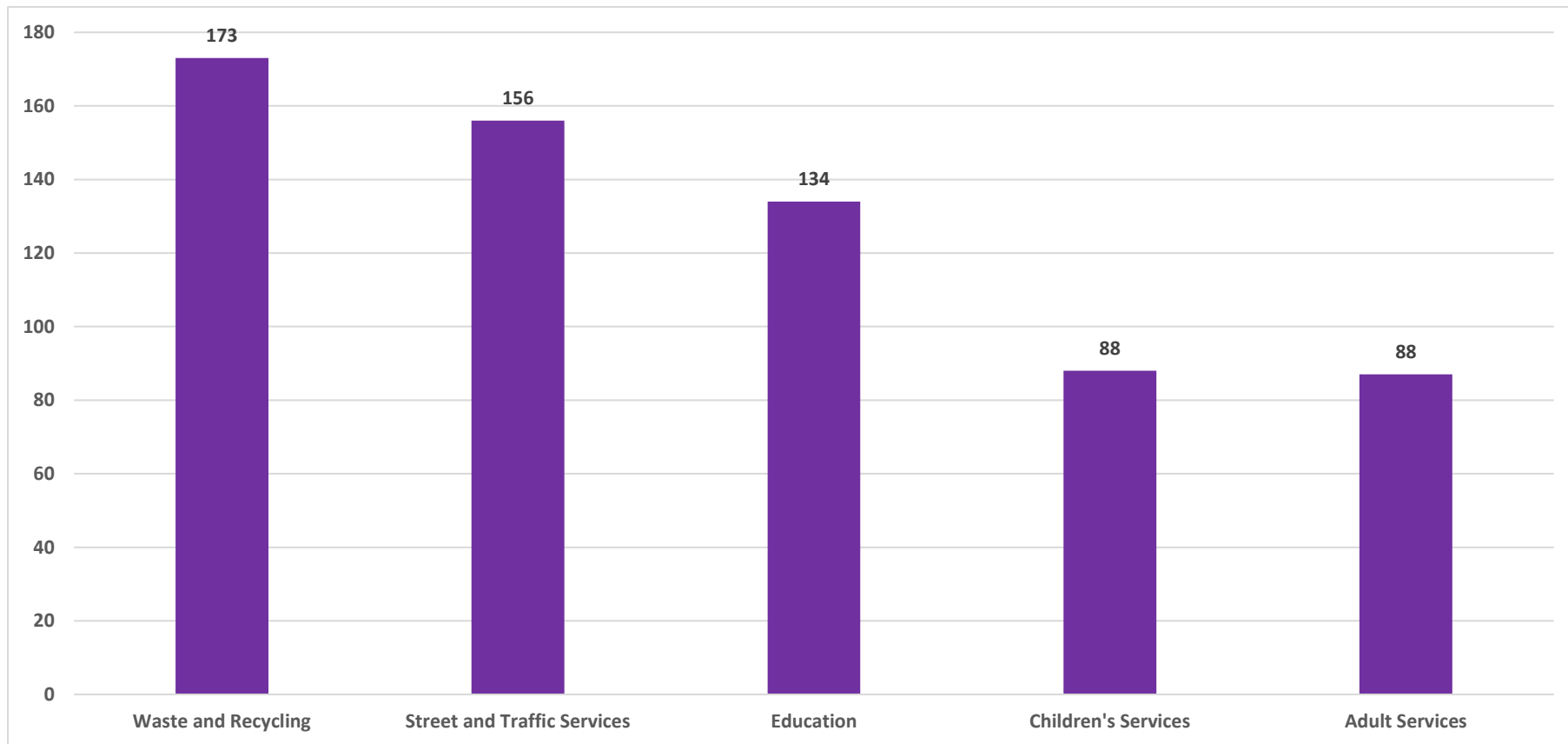
1.4 Services that are most important

The Council provides many services to the public. Respondents were asked that of the services they were personally aware of, which three are the most important to them. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 1: Top five services most important to respondents (ranked)

There were 364 respondents who answered this question. As respondents were asked that of the services they were personally aware of, which three are the most important to them, there were a total of 1,092 responses, commenting on 19 services.

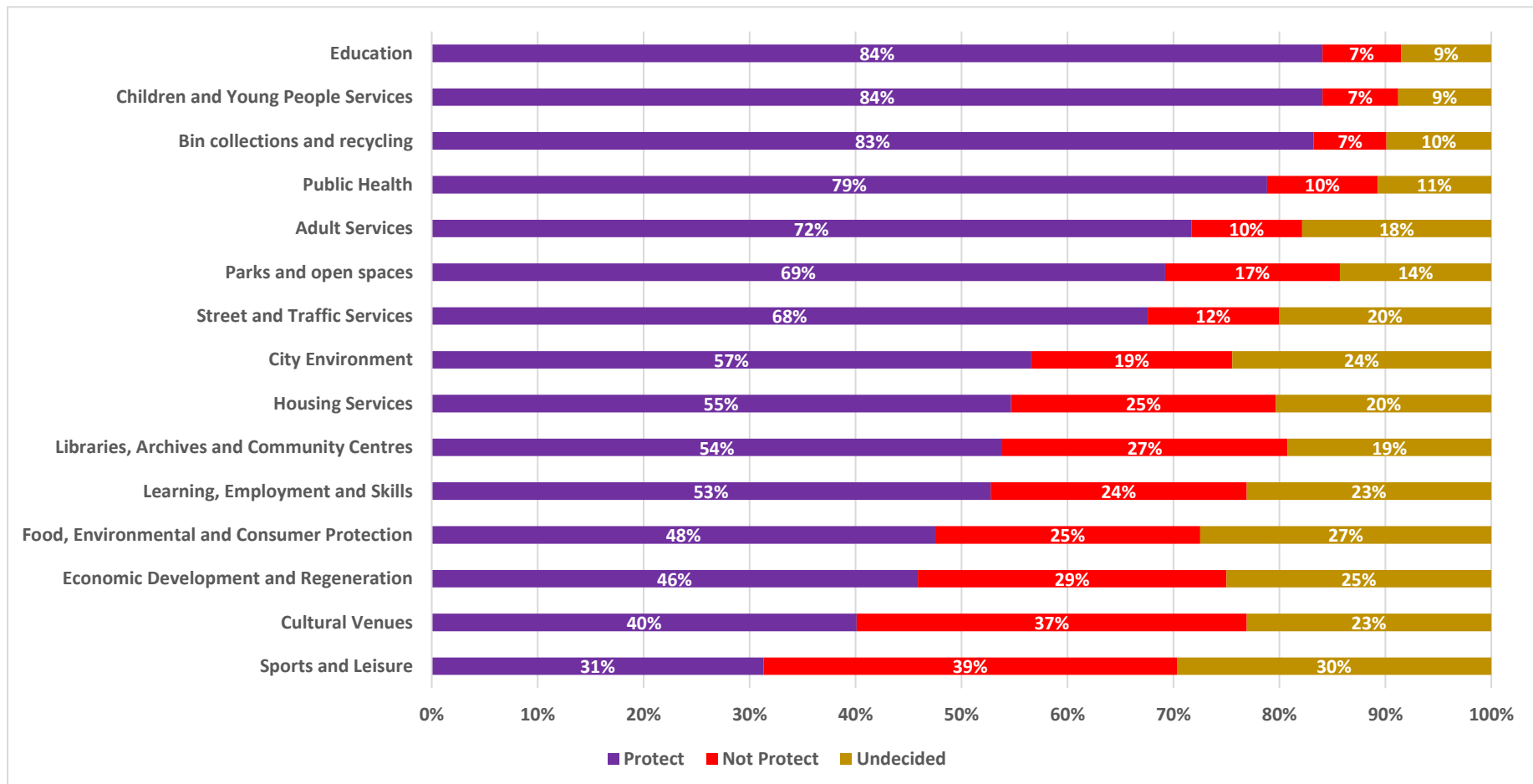
Of this, 173 (16%) respondents indicated that Waste and Recycling Services was the most important service, followed in second place by Street and Traffic Services (156 respondents; 14%), followed in third place by Education (134 respondents; 12%) stating this as one of their most important services. Children's and Adult Services formed a joint fifth place each with 8% of the responses (88 respondents).



1.5 Protecting services from further cuts

The Council has been faced with significantly reduced funding since 2010-2011 and budget cuts have had to be made. Respondents were asked to review a list of services that the Council provides and to choose if they think the services should or should not be protected from further cuts. All 364 respondents responded to this question. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

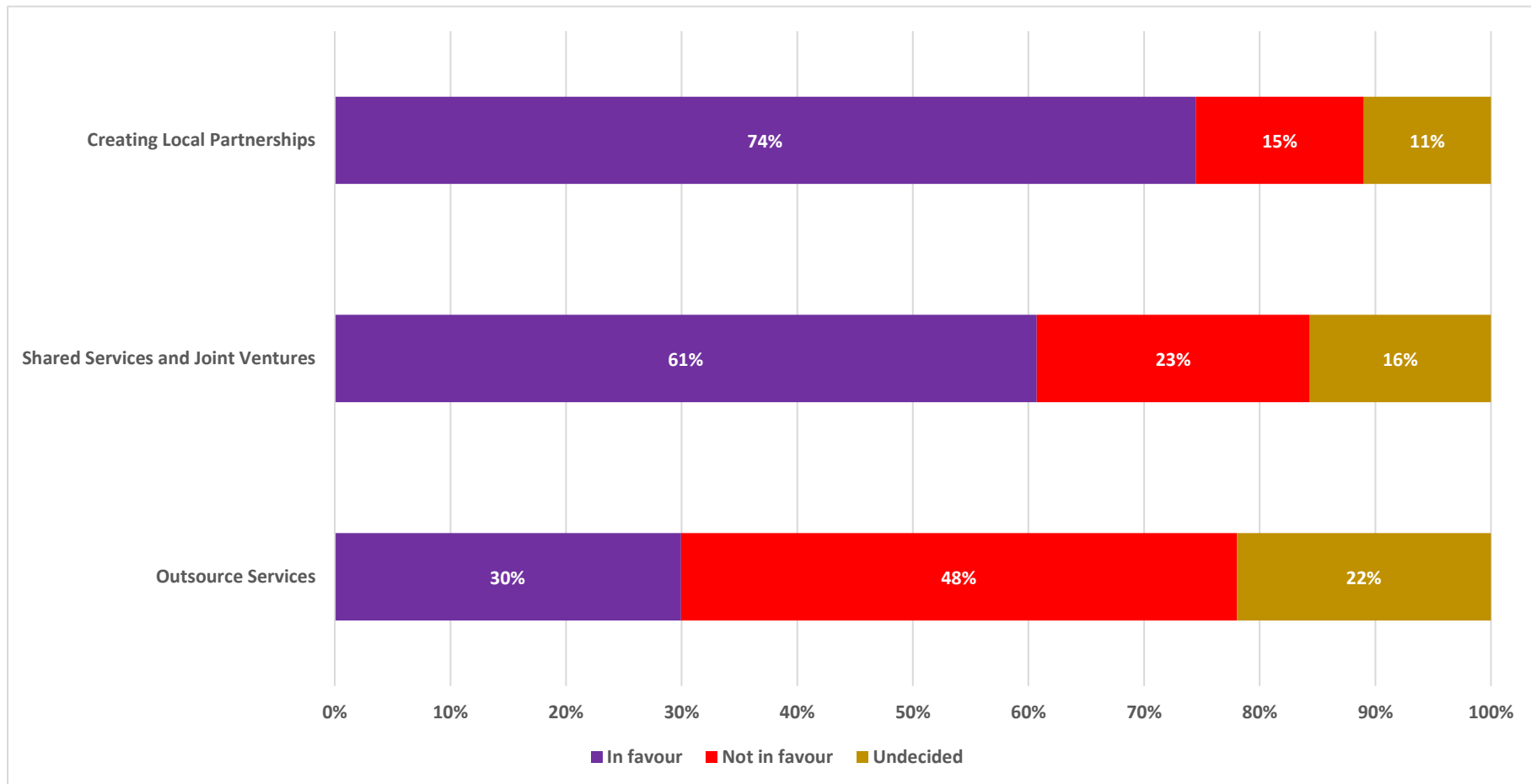
Chart 2: Which services should be protected from future cuts



1.6 Alternative services and new ways of working

Respondents were asked whether they were in favour of the Council engaging in alternative services and new ways of working to meet budget challenges. All 364 respondents responded to this question. Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 3: To meet budget challenges, would you like the Council to engage in alternative services and new ways of working, such as:



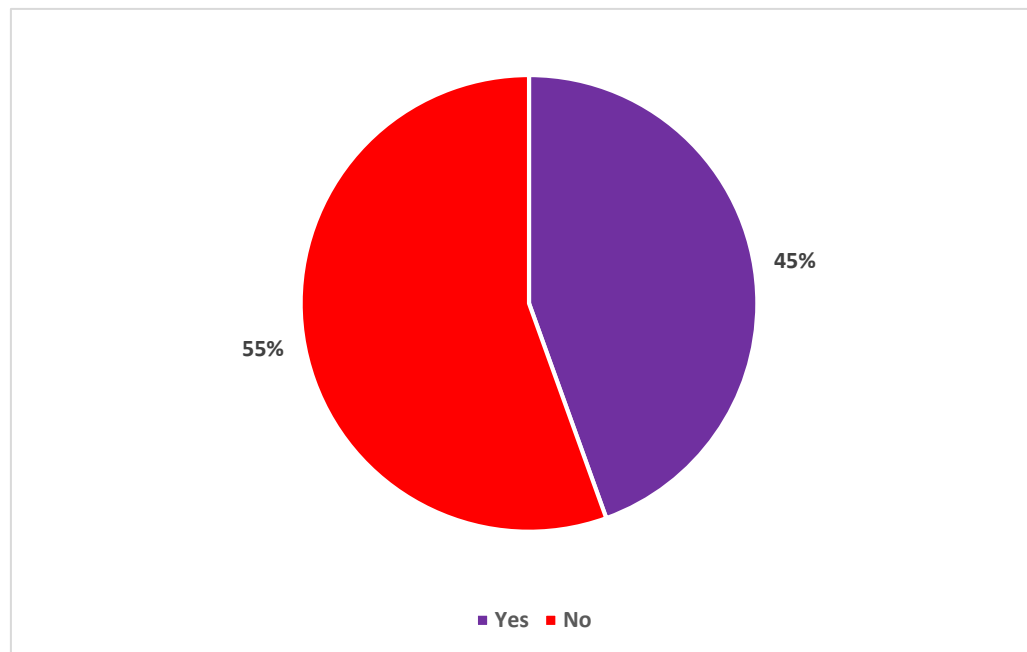
1.7 Raising the Council Tax

We are proposing a Council Tax increase of 1.99% for 2020-2021, and in line with Government policy, an additional 2% charge specifically to help to fund adult social care.

The proposed total 3.99% increase would be an extra £43.01 per year (83 pence per week) for the majority of properties in Wolverhampton (Valuation Band A) or if a single person discount is applicable for the property the increase for 2020-2021 would be an extra £32.26 per year (62 pence per week).

Respondents were asked if they agreed to our proposed increase to Council Tax to 1.99% (3.99% total increase including the additional 2% charge specifically to help fund adult social care). The funds generated would support the delivery of key services. All 364 respondents responded to this question and their responses are recorded in the following chart:

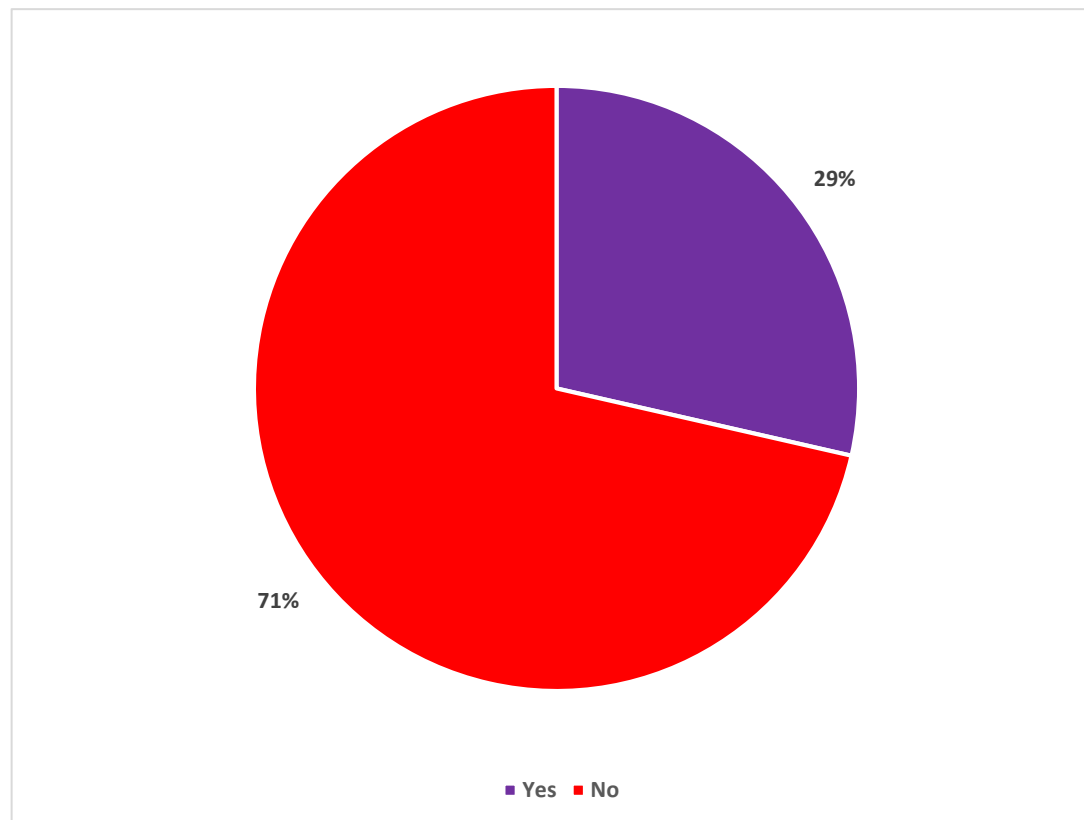
Chart 4: Would you be prepared to pay the proposed 2019-2020 increase to Council Tax



In the event that the Council Tax referendum limit were to be removed, respondents were asked to state whether they would be prepared to pay more Council Tax if it were to be increased by 2.99%.

The proposed total 4.99% increase (subject to Government raising the referendum limit) would be an extra £53.79 per year (£1.03 per week) for the majority of properties in Wolverhampton (Valuation Band A) or if a single person discount is applicable for the property the increase for 2020-2021 would be an extra £40.34 per year (78 pence per week). Their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 5: Would you be prepared to pay more Council Tax to protect key services from further cuts?



1.8 Additional flexibility to levy increases to the Adult Social Care precept

Respondents were asked whether they were in favour of increasing charges to support adult social care expenditure if the Government were to provide councils with the additional flexibility to levy increases to the Adult Social Care precept. All 364 respondents responded to this question and their responses are recorded in the following chart:

Chart 6: Would you be in favour of increasing charges to support adult social care expenditure?

